

factions on May 5, 2006, and was described by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice as “indispensable in our efforts to bring peace to Sudan and to end the violence in Darfur”;

Whereas other United States Government officials deeply involved in Darfur are departing public service or moving to new positions, including White House Policy Advisor Michael Gerson, National Security Council Senior Director for African Affairs Cindy Courville, and the State Department Special Representative to Sudan Michael Ranneberger; and

Whereas the crisis in Darfur, and generally Sudan, continues to command urgent attention due to the ongoing displacement of roughly 2,500,000 people, the continuing instability in the region, the fragility of the May 5, 2006, peace accord, the spread of the conflict to neighboring Chad, the lack of security that prevents multilateral organizations and nongovernmental organizations from providing assistance to the most vulnerable displaced persons of Darfur, the reluctance by the Government of Sudan to allow a robust United Nations presence in that country, and the difficulties involved in assisting the African Union Mission in Sudan and transitioning that body into a United Nations force: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That—

(1) the Senate commends the efforts of former Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick in Darfur and the contributions of White House Policy Advisor Michael Gerson, Ambassador Cindy Courville, and Ambassador Michael Ranneberger; and

(2) it is the sense of the Senate that—

(A) the United States urgently needs an individual of Ambassadorial rank and high stature to devote exclusive attention to Darfur and related issues concerning peace and stability in Sudan;

(B) such individual should formulate and coordinate policy, lead negotiations, engage with parties to the conflict to monitor their compliance with the terms and deadlines of the May 5, 2006, Darfur Peace Agreement, gather resources from donors, and ensure that this crisis retains high visibility and remains a top priority for the United States Government until it is substantially resolved; and

(C) the President should, at the earliest date possible, appoint a Presidential Special Envoy for Sudan with the rank of Ambassador and should provide not less than \$250,000, to support the Presidential Special Envoy, in accordance with Senate Amendment 3719 to H.R. 4939 of the 109th Congress, as agreed to in the Senate on May 3, 2006.

SENATE RESOLUTION 532—ENCOURAGING THE ADULTS OF THE UNITED STATES TO SUPPORT, LISTEN TO, AND ENCOURAGE CHILDREN SO THAT THEY MAY REACH THEIR POTENTIAL

Ms. COLLINS (for herself and Mr. ISAKSON) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions:

S. RES 532

Whereas research shows that spending time together as a family is critical to raising strong and resilient children;

Whereas strong, healthy families improve the quality of life and the development of children;

Whereas it is essential to celebrate and reflect upon the important role that all families play in the lives of children and their positive effect for the future of the United States; and

Whereas the greatest natural resource of the United States is its children: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate supports the goals and ideals of National Children and Families Day—

(1) to encourage adults to support, listen to, and encourage children throughout the United States;

(2) to reflect upon the important role that all families play in the lives of children; and

(3) to recognize that strong, healthy families improve the quality of life and the development of children.

CALLING ON THE PRESIDENT AND OTHER LEADERS TO ENGAGE IN FRANK DIALOG

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 530, introduced earlier today by Senator BIDEN.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 530) calling on President George W. Bush and other leaders attending the 2006 Group of Eight (G-8) Summit in St. Petersburg, Russia to engage in a frank dialogue with the President of Russia concerning actions of the Government of the Russian Federation that appear inconsistent with the Group's objectives of protecting global security, economic stability, and democracy, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I further ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate, and that any statements relating to the measure be printed in the RECORD.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 530) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 530

Whereas the leaders of 6 major industrialized democracies including France, West Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States, gathered in 1975 for a summit meeting in Rambouillet, France and for annual meetings thereafter under a rotating presidency known as the Group of Six (G-6);

Whereas the G-6 was established based on the mutual interest of its members in promoting economic stability, global security, and democracy;

Whereas, in 1976, membership of the G-6 was expanded to include Canada;

Whereas the members of the G-7 share a commitment to promote security, economic stability, and democracy in their respective nations and around the world;

Whereas Russia was integrated into the Group in 1998 at the behest of President William Jefferson Clinton as a gesture of appreciation to then-President of Russia Boris Yeltsin for pursuing reforms and assuming a neutral position with respect to the eastward expansion of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO);

Whereas, in 2002, Russia was selected to hold the rotating presidency of the G-8 and to host the Summit of the G-8 in 2006;

Whereas the official G-8 statement issued on June 26, 2002, in Kananaskis, Canada regarding the selection of Russia as host of the 2006 Summit stated that the decision reflected “the remarkable economic and democratic transformation that has occurred in Russia in recent years and in particular under the leadership of President Putin”;

Whereas in the intervening 4 years since Russia was selected to host the 2006 G-8 Summit, the Government of the Russian Federation has pursued policies that raise serious concerns about the commitment of the Government of the Russian Federation to upholding democratic values both at home and abroad;

Whereas the United States Department of State 2005 Country Report on Human Rights Practices noted that trends in Russia, including the “centralization of power in the executive branch . . . continuing corruption and selectivity in enforcement of the law, political pressure on the judiciary, and harassment of some non-governmental organizations (NGOs) [have] resulted in an erosion of the accountability of government leaders to the people” in Russia;

Whereas, in 2005, the independent non-governmental organization Freedom House reclassified Russia from “partly free” to “not free” in its global survey of political rights and civil liberties;

Whereas the Government of the Russian Federation has placed onerous restrictions and monitoring requirements on non-profit organizations operating in Russia that limit the ability of both Russians and non-Russians to create a vibrant civil society in the country;

Whereas the freedom of the media in Russia has been seriously compromised due to the Government of the Russian Federation's continuing control and censorship of major mass media outlets and efforts to obstruct the reporting of independent journalists;

Whereas regulators from the Ministry of Culture of the Government of the Russian Federation have reportedly threatened radio stations with revocation of their broadcast licenses if they continue airing material from the Voice of America (VOA) and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), thereby precipitating the largest decrease in the number of outlets for VOA and RFE/RL reporting since the end of the Cold War;

Whereas the Government of the Russian Federation has sought to interfere in the electoral processes and democratic governance of neighboring countries including Georgia and Ukraine;

Whereas Russia was the only member of the G-8 to applaud the outcome of fraudulent presidential elections in Belarus that were characterized by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe as evidencing “a disregard for the basic rights of freedom of assembly, association, and expression”;

Whereas the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom and other monitoring organizations have reported increased evidence of racism, anti-Semitism, nationalism, and xenophobia among segments of Russian society;

Whereas, in late 2005, Gazprom, a company majority owned and operated by the Government of the Russian Federation, insisted on a more than four-fold increase in the price charged for natural gas sold to Ukraine and subsequently shut off gas supplies to Ukraine, causing cascading energy shortages in many countries throughout Europe;

Whereas there have been interruptions in the supply by Russia of energy to Georgia and Moldova;

Whereas the March 2006 report from of the Independent Task Force on Russia of the Council on Foreign Relations stated that “to protect the credibility of the G-8 at a time when many are questioning Russia’s chairmanship, the United States should make clear that this role does not exempt Russian policies and actions from critical scrutiny”;

Whereas the United States recognizes and applauds the proud history of achievement, creativity, and sacrifice of the people of Russia;

Whereas the United States seeks the development of Russia as a strong, responsible, democratic partner in promoting global peace and security; and

Whereas the United States believes that both the people of Russia and the Government of the Russian Federation will be shackled in their efforts to build a strong society domestically and contribute to the work of the international community so long as the Government of the Russian Federation fails to fully embrace the values of democracy: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the Senate that—

(1) in order to preserve the integrity of the G-8 as a forum of the leading industrialized democracies of the world, President George W. Bush and other heads of state attending the G-8 Summit should explicitly, frankly, and honestly engage Russian Federation President Vladimir Putin in a dialogue about the anti-democratic behavior of the Government of the Russian Federation;

(2) the United States and other democratic countries should reaffirm their support for civic and non-governmental organizations working to promote democracy and the rule of law in Russia;

(3) the Government of the Russian Federation should take action to ensure that it guarantees the full range of civil and political rights to its citizens, as it is obligated to do under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;

(4) consistent with its obligations under the International Covenant, the Government of the Russian Federation should take steps to cease its interference with foreign news organizations, including the Voice of America and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty;

(5) the Government of the Russian Federation should take action to combat rising racism, anti-Semitism, and xenophobia in Russian society; and

(6) the United States and countries of the G-8 should reaffirm their support for new democracies on the borders of Russia and, where applicable, expedite their integration into Euro-Atlantic institutions to provide a bulwark for democracy in eastern Europe and the Caucasus.

EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF CONGRESS REGARDING THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Foreign Relations Committee be discharged from further consideration and the Senate now proceed to S. Res. 500.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 500) expressing the sense of Congress that the Russian Federation should fully protect the freedoms of all religious communities without distinction, whether registered or unregistered, as stipulated by the Russian Constitution and international standards.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 500) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 500

Whereas the Russian Federation is a participating State of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and has freely committed to fully respect the rights of individuals, whether alone or in community with others, to profess and practice religion or belief;

Whereas the 1989 Vienna Concluding Document calls on OSCE participating States to “take effective measures to prevent and eliminate discrimination against individuals or communities on the grounds of religion or belief” and to “grant upon their request to communities of believers, practicing or prepared to practice their faith within the constitutional framework of their States, recognition of the status provided for them in the respective countries”;

Whereas Article 28 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation declares that “everyone shall be guaranteed the right to freedom of conscience, to freedom of religious worship, including the right to profess, individually or jointly with others, any religion” and Article 8 of the 1997 Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations provides for registration for religious communities as “religious organizations,” if they have at least 10 members and have operated within the Russian Federation with legal status for at least 15 years;

Whereas religious freedom has advanced significantly for the vast majority of people in Russia since the collapse of the Soviet Union;

Whereas many rights and privileges afforded to religious communities in the Russian Federation remain contingent on the ability of the communities to obtain government registration;

Whereas some religious groups have not attempted to register with government authorities due to theological considerations, and other communities have been unjustly denied registration or had their registration improperly terminated by local authorities;

Whereas many of the unregistered communities in the Russian Federation today were never registered under the Soviet system because they refused to collaborate with that government’s anti-religious policies and they are now experiencing renewed discrimination and repression by authorities of the Russian Federation;

Whereas over the past 2 years there have been an estimated 10 arson attacks on unregistered Protestant churches, with little or no effective response by law enforcement officials to bring the perpetrators to justice;

Whereas the Government of the Russian Federation reacted swiftly in response to the January 2006 attack on a Moscow synagogue, but there have been numerous other anti-Semitic attacks against Jews and Jewish institutions in the Russian Federation, and there is increasing tolerance of anti-Semitism in certain segments of society in that country;

Whereas there has been evidence of an increase in the frequency and severity of op-

pressive actions by security forces and federal and local officials against some Muslim communities and their members;

Whereas there are many cases involving restitution for religious property seized by the Soviet regime that remain unresolved;

Whereas in some areas of the Russian Federation law enforcement personnel have carried out acts of harassment and oppression against members of religious communities peacefully practicing their faith and local officials have put overly burdensome restrictions on the ability of some religious communities to engage in religious activity; and

Whereas the United States has sought to protect the fundamental and inalienable right of individuals to profess and practice their faith, alone or in community with others, according to the dictates of their conscience, and in accordance with international agreements committing nations to respect individual freedom of thought, conscience, and belief: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of Congress that the United States Government should—

(1) urge the Government of the Russian Federation to ensure full protection of freedoms for all religious communities without distinction, whether registered or unregistered, and end the harassment of unregistered religious groups by the security apparatus and other government agencies, thereby building upon the progress made over the past 15 years in promoting religious freedom in the Russian Federation;

(2) urge the Government of the Russian Federation to ensure that law enforcement officials vigorously investigate and prosecute acts of violence, arson, and desecration perpetrated against registered and unregistered religious communities, as well as make certain that government authorities are not complicit in such incidents;

(3) continue to raise concerns with the Government of the Russian Federation over violations of religious freedom, including those against unregistered religious communities, especially indigenous denominations not well known in the United States;

(4) ensure that United States Embassy officials engage local officials throughout the Russian Federation, especially when violations of freedom of religion occur, and undertake outreach activities to educate local officials about the rights of unregistered religious communities;

(5) urge the Government of the Russian Federation to invite the three Personal Representatives of the OSCE Chair-in-Office and the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief to visit the Russian Federation and discuss with federal and local officials concerns about the religious freedom of both registered and unregistered religious communities; and

(6) urge the Council of Europe, its member countries, and the other members of the G-8 to raise issues relating to religious freedom with Russian officials in the context of the Russian Federation’s responsibilities both as President of the Council in 2006 and as a member of the G-8.

MEASURE READ THE FIRST TIME—H.R. 9

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I understand there is a bill at the desk, and I ask for its first reading.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the bill by title for the first time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 9) to amend the Voting Rights Act of 1965.